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WORRY: YOUR TYRANT OR YOUR TOOL

Mayan Revelation Number 255

Let Us Analyze Worry

Don't Fret: Work

Worry: The Tyrant

Trust God

Gain Perspective

Make Worry Your Tool

Affirmation

Beloved Perfector:

~~Your Instructor is aware that after years of study of Mayanry you no doubt have shaken most of the bad thought-habits which plague mankind. In recent weeks you have put forth a special effort to control fear and to make your natural anxieties serve a useful purpose.~~

WORRY, which you will now strive to master, is composed of fears - very often petty fears - which take control of the mind, coloring and dominating all thought. Probably this monster doesn't have the grip upon your life that it has upon many. Its devastating power, however, is widespread - probably more widespread today than ever before. The twentieth century has been called THE AGE OF ANXIETY.

An American writer stated: "Worry is the most popular form of suicide." No doubt he was thinking of what worry does by spoiling the appetite, impairing digestion, and lowering the body's natural defenses against disease. This would be bad enough; but we know that worry also warps the mind, injuriously affecting disposition and character. It causes more unhappiness than all major disasters.

Worry is so widespread that no one is untouched by it. Therefore it is urgent that from time to time each one of us make the effort to analyze the nature of worry, and to learn to control worry-thoughts, instead of letting them control us.

Let us repeat the following prayer before proceeding with our lesson which we have called WORRY: YOUR TYRANT OR YOUR TOOL.



PRAYER

Father, I thank Thee for the power to plan, to dream, and to reason. Help me this day to understand more of Thy divine laws and to use my intelligence to control worry and to grasp more of the joy of life. Help me to trust not only in my own power, but in Thy great love and care. Amen.

WORRY: THE TYRANT

There is hardly a person who does not worry at some time, to some degree. This prompts us to conclude that worry is normal. In one sense it is. This might be compared to saying that reproduction of cell tissue in your body and mine is normal. We know that when the process goes on at its proper rate growth serves a useful purpose, but if tissue multiplies abnormally, cancer results.

When a problem arises which threatens you or those you love, worry thoughts creep into your mind. In this lesson we will analyze several common types of worry and present constructive ways to deal with them. First let us see the danger which threatens us when we allow persistent worry to dominate our thinking for hours, or days, or even weeks.

Excessive worry is destructive, life-consuming. It interferes with healthy, intelligent thought. It warps the vision. It burns up the energy which we need for work. It counteracts the re-creating force of leisure.

If you let some worry of yours grow and grow, it will become your tyrant. It will dictate to your mind. You may even become so enslaved that you cannot stop thinking about your fear, or your trouble. If you have allowed this to happen you will have to learn to shake off the worry before you are able to completely give your attention to other matters.

A young and successful clergyman had an attack of laryngitis. In the middle of his sermon he found he was unable to speak above a whisper. All the next week he worried for fear he wouldn't be able to preach. He burned up his reserves of energy and came to Sunday in a state of exhaustion. When he entered the pulpit he did have a voice, but he had little spiritual power. This set up other worries; worry that he was not called to be a minister and worry that his laryngitis would return and become a permanent affliction. On Monday he went to bed and his wife called their family physician. He examined the man, gave a prescription, and said the illness should last only a few days.

One week, two weeks, three weeks passed. The man still felt too ill to preach. Then the family physician sent him to a psychiatrist. Treatment threw light upon the motives for his behavior, and in a short time he regained his ability to speak clearly and to behave rationally.

In this case a temporary disability had stirred up latent misgivings until they so dominated the man's mind that only a psychiatrist could bring release. Deep set and persistent magnification of trouble may require professional skill

to unlock its hold.

In most instances a firm determination to see things in proper perspective is the first step toward freedom from worry. We know that our lives are more often frayed by trivial concerns than by grave dangers.

Only in extreme cases are the services of a psychiatrist needed. A courageous resolve on the part of the person who is troubled, sometimes supplemented by intelligent guidance from a pastor or friend, is usually all that is required to break the hold of worry. This is especially true if action is taken early, before the worry-habit becomes firmly entrenched.

Yet you know it is not easy to escape the clutches of worry. It will require great effort, the summoning of all your will-power. But when you see clearly what happens when a person lets worry dominate his life, you know you must use every resource you can summon to maintain mastery of your own mind.

I think of a woman who spoiled a whole day - spoiled it for herself and in some measure for everyone who entered her home, spoiled it because her dog wandered out of sight. Concern was natural. Worry, to a degree which prevented her from doing anything constructive, was unreasonable. Although early the next morning the dog was found on her doorstep, even the joy in recovering it did not restore her vitality. Worry had so depleted her energy that another day passed before she could properly do her work.

"How foolish!" you say. But before you censor the woman stop and think of the last thing which worried you. Did you magnify the danger? Did your fretting help you to solve your problem? Did worry get such a grip upon your mind that constructive thoughts were excluded?

What you think affects your happiness far more than circumstances. If you allow negative thoughts to control your mind, if you let worry become your tyrant, you can be miserable throughout every waking hour, and then toss fitfully at night.

Perhaps you are saying, "But everyone worries. The farmer worries about the rain. The manufacturer worries about the fluctuating market. The mother worries about her children. The student worries about his examinations. Is there really any escape from these worries?"

No, you can never completely avoid them; but by intelligent thought-control you can get off the mental merry-go-round, and conserve the energy you need for productive activity.

LET US ANALYZE WORRY

Recognizing the urgency to prevent worry from becoming a fixed habit, let us now analyze the most prevalent types. If we know our enemy we can make our attack more intelligently.

The most devastating of all worries stems from a feeling - real or imaginary - that you have committed some wrong and sooner or later it will be found out. This hangs over your head like a sword of Damocles, constantly threatening to destroy your reputation, if not your life.

Obviously the intelligent approach is to recognize that everyone makes mistakes. Don't magnify the evil. See the deed, or thought, or habit for what it is worth.

Then, if you have wronged someone, ask for forgiveness and do whatever you can to make recompense. Be generous. Go the Second-mile. This will bring healing to the wound you were constantly probing and irritating. Loving action will free you from the torment of worry.

The second type of worry comes from anticipating trouble. It tortures the mind of the back-seat driver who sees a wreck around each corner. It plagues the investor who month after month fears a crash in the market. It gains a strangle hold on the mother who will not relax from the moment Johnny walks out of the door until he returns.

Certainly the first thing to do in combating this type of worry is to take reasonable precautions. Check your tires. Put your money in insured or diversified investments. Fence in the yard when your child is small, and later teach him to look where he is going, and to choose the safest way.

After you have done what you can to avoid tragedy, don't live in constant fear of disaster. The worst seldom happens.

Recognize that over the past ten years most of the evils which you thought might come upon you have never occurred. All your worries were in vain - wasted thoughts, burning up energy which should have been directed into other channels.

A third type of worry is the cry over spilled milk. It is useless to keep saying: "Oh, if I'd only made the right decision!" You may have made a mistake; or you may be painting a rosy picture of what would have happened if you'd made the other choice.

In any case the past is past. Turn your attention to what you should do now. Conserve your strength for creative living.

Worry is one of the "sins of the fathers visited upon the children" unless it is brought under control. When a person lets some small fear become a monster-worry, he not only loses all possibility of achieving personal happiness, he destroys the peace within his home. He puts a discordant note into the thinking of everyone whose life touches his.

As your Instructor has analyzed the major types of worry suggestions have been made for the treatment of each one. Now we will consider in more detail the attitudes and procedures which are effective in bringing all forms of worry under control.



GAIN PERSPECTIVE

A business executive said to his co-workers: "Stop fretting over the little things. Some of you have been complaining because there is too much work to do. You go home weary and come to the office with dragging feet. I did that myself a year ago. Then I came to the realization that I was exhausted not by the big problems I had to face, but by trivialities. If a shipment was a day late I fretted over it. Now I try to evaluate each problem by asking myself, 'How important will this be tomorrow? How important will it be next week?'

"Whenever the answer is 'it will be insignificant', I brush all worry over it from my mind and turn my attention to something else. Now that I've established this practice I find it possible to do far more work without getting tired."

The executive concluded by saying, "Men, I want you to see things in proper perspective. If this organization is to go forward it needs the best efforts of every man. We'll never accomplish big things if we waste our energy fretting over trivials."

This advice is what we all need. Every one of us finds it necessary at times to ask ourselves: "How important will the thing I'm worrying about look to me next week, or next year?"

Beloved Perfector, take time to evaluate the things which are troubling you. Don't see them through a magnifying glass. Give your problem an honest appraisal. Upon careful scrutiny things which once appeared frightening may shrink in size.

Many of your worries can be dispelled by seeing them in the light of tomorrow. Some will continue to plague you unless you interpret them in the light of eternity.

Always remember that what you own is not half as important as what you are. What becomes of your clothes, or your house, or even your body is insignificant compared to what happens to your soul. See your life today as part of your eternal life. Then even your worst anxiety will lose much of its power to make you miserable.

The fact that you are capable of thinking about the future, of planning ahead, indicates that you are of a higher order than the animals. The cow does not worry about the crop of hay; the dog does not worry about tomorrow's shelter. Men and women, however, are so made that we are able both to recall past joys and to plan for future satisfactions. While this frequently subjects us to intellectual pain, it also enables us to enjoy mental and spiritual delights not experienced by the animals.

While we can never completely avoid worry, we can control it. There are techniques which we can use to minimize its power. Getting our lives into focus - seeing the important things as big, and the trivial as of small consequence - is the first step. Then must come a firm determination to let action supplant anxiety and regret.

DON'T FRET: WORK

True happiness does not come from complacency, or even from the absence of trouble. It is found in the composure and steadiness which result from facing problems and struggling to solve them. So we should endeavor to stop fretting and put our minds to work.

Some people have found a helpful approach is to keep a list of their worries. This usually reveals the fact that most of them are foolish as well as futile.

If you now have any persistent worries, why not put them down on paper?
Then:

1. Cross off all those which are unworthy of your attention.
2. Note what can be done to remove the causes of those which remain.
3. Seek relief not in tranquilizers, but in positive thinking and positive action.

Fill your mind with pleasant thoughts. Recall happy experiences. Read a current book, or the Bible. Then plunge from contemplation into action. Activity - mental and physical - provides an escape from the net of worry.

If the evil which threatens your life is of gigantic proportions that is all the more reason for refusing to let worry sap your strength. You'll need your total resources if you are to do the things which must be done.

Strange as it seems, a man or woman who for years has complained incessantly about dangers which were mostly imaginary, may behave heroically in an hour of crisis. This is because action is then imperative. There is no time for fretting.

Let this point up the truth that one technique for breaking the hold of worry is: to get busy doing something constructive. After you have become realistic about your problem, and cut it down to size, see if there is anything you can do to improve the situation. If there is, tackle it today. If there isn't, turn your attention to something else.

Dr. William Lyon Phelps said that he had five methods which helped him to overcome the habit of worry.

- Live with gusto and enthusiasm.
- Read an interesting book.
- Become physically active, if possible.
- Relax while you work.
- Try to see your troubles in their proper perspective.

The exhilaration which Dr. Phelps found in each day's challenge adds weight to his words. Apply his rules to your life, Beloved Perfectionist. These are some of the finest techniques for breaking the worry habit. There is another which Dr. Phelps did not list, but which he practiced faithfully throughout his long life. It is the habit of doing your best and then trusting God for the rest.

TRUST GOD

Worry can be weakened by the antitoxin of faith.

The great Bishop Quayle once preached a sermon on Trust in which he told his congregation of an experience he had when tragedy threatened his family. He said, "I worried and worried most of one Saturday night. I was becoming exhausted, and in desperation prayed, 'God, what shall I do? You know I have to preach tomorrow.' The Bishop paused, and then said, reverently, 'God spoke to me in my hour of need. God said, 'Quayle, you turn over and go to sleep. Let me worry the rest of the night.'"

When you and I have a difficult problem, we must first bring all our intelligence to bear upon it. Then we must substitute action for fretting. After we have done all we can for ourselves we can safely leave the outcome in God's hands.

Sometimes, quite unexpectedly, the problem will evaporate. Sometimes friends will bring assistance or encouragement. We find that our misgivings are cut in half when we share them with someone whom we trust.

We have reserves of strength - physical strength, courage, and wisdom - which we seldom use. God has supplied us with hidden resources which we should tap in times of emergency. We can not only stand more than we think we are able to bear, but we can endure it nobly. We will do better, though, if throughout the years we have not worn our minds and weakened our bodies by the drip, drip, drip of a stream of negative thoughts.

Instead we should daily repeat the Affirmations and the Bible verses which proclaim our faith. Some which state the truths we seek from this Lesson are:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;....
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall
direct thy paths....
Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and
thy foot shall not stumble.
When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid:
yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be
sweet." (from the third chapter of Proverbs)

MAKE WORRY YOUR TOOL

Whenever you are faced with the temptation to become a chronic worrier,

avoid three pitfalls:

Uncertainty

Indecision

Underestimating your power

Worry can get a strangle hold on your thinking whenever you sense a need to do something to protect yourself, or others, and you don't know what to do about it. It can undermine your life if you know you've made a mistake and you don't know how to apologize or amend the wrong.

Use your intelligence to size up the situation. Determine what you must do. Summon all your powers of reason and bring them to bear upon the subject which is tormenting you. Seek another's help, if necessary. Ask God for direction and you will receive it.

Once you see the first step you must take toward removing the cause of your worry, act. Don't wait until you clearly see all of the road ahead. Do what you know how to do. Further light will be given to you as you crowd out worry by constructive action.

~~Remove the danger, whenever this is possible. Make a necessary improvement when you can, or make the best possible adjustment. Use your mind and your strength; don't waste it in worry.~~

Remember that even if worry has been chiseling away your happiness this does not mean you are a neurotic. Think of yourself as a person who wants the best which life has to offer - the best for yourself and the best for others. This concern is a virtue. This concern is an asset. This concern is a tool you are going to use for fashioning a happy, satisfying life.

Any basic urge can injure you if it is allowed to run wild: the desire for food, when it leads to obesity; the desire for love, when it leads to sex indulgence; or the desire for security, when it leads to selfishness. In like manner honest concern - which should contribute to character building - becomes worry when it gets out of control.

Don't waste time in self-condemnation. If you have been given a sensitive nature, thank God for it. Then ask His help in your struggle to use it for building a noble life for yourself. Ask His guidance in your efforts to assist and protect others.

Hammer your daggers of worry on the forge of faith. Shape them into tools of loving care. Use them for building life, not for destroying it.

IN CONCLUSION:

Worry is persistent. It dogs you. It begs for your time and attention. So if you would shake worry, Beloved Perfector, you must rally your inner resources and make a firm stand.

Don't hug your worries to yourself, finding selfish satisfaction in your torture.

Don't hold some worry so close to your eyes that it hides your vision of what should be done.

Don't let fretting be an excuse for neglect of constructive work.

Instead:

BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF; allow no escapism.

BE SEVERE WITH YOURSELF, even as a loving parent refuses to indulge his child.

ANALYZE YOUR WORRY, so you can attack it intelligently.

FACE UP TO YOUR WORRY, so it will lose its hold.

GET BUSY; work will promote a peaceful mind.

Having done all you can, TRUST GOD. He will give you the peace you desire.

Never let worry become your tyrant. Make it your tool. Let it prod you to study, to improve your situation, and to do your best. Let it make you more sympathetic to the longings and frailties of others.

As you acquire more and more of the techniques for conquering worry use your knowledge not only to maintain your own peace of mind, but to help others who are struggling against some obsession which threatens to cripple their lives.

AFFIRMATION

With God's help I can break the strangle hold of any worry. I will summon positive, creative ideas to control my thinking and my life.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR.